



## Dr. Scott Harris Named State Health Officer

By unanimous vote, the State Committee of Public Health appointed Scott Harris, M.D., M.P.H., to full status as state health officer effective February 21. Dr. Harris had served in an acting capacity since September 1 following the retirement of State Health Officer Dr. Tom Miller. Prior to his promotion, Dr. Harris was area health officer for Public Health Area 2.

Congratulations to Alabama's twelfth state health officer.



**State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris is shown at the 2018 ADPH Social Work Seminar and Training at Alabama State University on March 7.**

## Join the Alabama Public Health Association in 'Navigating the River of Health' at its 2018 Annual Conference

The Alabama Public Health Association (ALPHA) has opened registration for its 2018 Annual Conference, set for April 4-6 at the Montgomery Marriott Prattville Hotel & Conference Center at Capitol Hill in Prattville. Registration information is now available at [alphassoc.org/conference](http://alphassoc.org/conference).

This year's conference carries the theme "Navigating the River of Health," and features sessions and speakers covering a wide variety of health care topics. The agenda is still being finalized, but a tentative list of sessions includes:

- "The Opioid Epidemic and Determinants of Infant Mortality in Alabama"
- "Electronic Cigarettes and Public Health"
- "Lessons in Cultural Humility: The LGBTQ Client"
- "How to Deal with Difficult People"

The future of health records and reporting will also be topics of discussion, including sessions on Electronic Health Data and the Alabama Violent Death Reporting System.

The conference will kick off at 1 p.m. on April 4 with a session led by ALPHA President Kimberly Gordon, Alabama Department of Public Health East Central District Administrator Richard Burleson, State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris, American Public Health Association representative Dr. Joseph Telfair, and Southern Health Association President Dr. Georgia Heise.

Traditionally, ALPHA holds an awards ceremony during the conference to honor individuals for their outstanding service in public health. Among the awards that will be presented this year are:

- The D.G. Gill Award for exceptional contributions to public health in Alabama;
- The Anne M. Smith Excellence in Public Health Nursing Award; and
- The Ira L. Myers Award for excellence and achievement toward the promotion and protection of public health.

The cost of registering for the conference is \$160 per person; students and retirees can register for \$80 per person. Attendees can make room reservations at the Montgomery Marriott Prattville Hotel & Conference Center at Capitol Hill by calling 1-800-228-9290 or 334-290-1235, or by using the dedicated reservation link at [alphassoc.org/conference](http://alphassoc.org/conference).

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# Montgomery County Health Department Takes to the Midway: Food Safety at the Fair

“People come from miles around...” The catchy jingle heard every October on TV and radio stations throughout central Alabama evokes a sense of fall and reminds many of us that the Alabama National Fair will soon roll into town. Whether it is the elephant ears or the elephants in the circus, there is a sense of nostalgia and familiarity that comes with the fair. Operating now for over 60 years, the fair is held annually at the Garrett Coliseum in Montgomery. It is sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Montgomery and serves as the organization’s sole fundraising event.

In 2017, the Alabama National Fair was open from October 27 through November 5 and included 49 vendors preparing and selling food or drinks. Among the food vendors serving the usual hot dogs, funnel cakes, and lemonade, there were several new options for the more adventurous eater to sample. Bringing in a little bit of the Louisiana bayou, Cajun Concessions offered boudain balls, which are premade battered balls of pork sausage, rice, and bell peppers deep-fried to perfection. Sivori Catering, a regular staple at the Alabama National Fair, introduced a new concession tent this year selling “totchos” (think, nachos but with tater tots instead of tortilla chips). Even a carnival classic got a little update. The traditional funnel cake, circular mounds of deep-fried dough, was now topped with cooked bacon bits and drizzled with maple syrup. Fairgoers certainly could not complain about a shortage of choices in deep-fried goodness on which to indulge.

Temporary events, such as the fair, occur periodically throughout the year and must be inspected in addition to the over 1,400 permanent food establishments regularly inspected by the Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD). A “temporary event” is defined as a special occurrence or celebration that is community-wide, such as a fair, carnival, public exhibition, festival, or similar occasion that lasts no more than 14 days.

These temporary events have vendors that set up and sell food and drinks to the public for a short period of time. The vendors at these events are required to be permitted, inspected, and regulated like any other food establishment. While the fair may mean funnel cakes, ferris wheels, and farm exhibits for most people, for the environmentalists at the MCHD, the fair also means one more thing: food safety.

So every October the staff at the MCHD prepares to enter the world of turkey legs and cotton candy to inspect the food vendors and fairground facilities. However, unlike a permanent food establishment, the temporary nature of these events poses some unique challenges. For example, since most concession trailers or stands are small and have customer service openings near the cooking area, insects can become a major issue and must be controlled with screens or fly fans. Also, because the water necessary for the operation of these events is often stored using portable containers, it is important to ensure the supply water comes from a safe source and the wastewater is disposed of properly and does not spill onto the ground. Additionally, there are public health concerns that also apply to the fairgrounds in general. MCHD’s Environmental Director Cindy Goocher and General Sanitation Supervisor Ken Stephens are responsible for inspecting the fairgrounds before and during the operation of the fair to ensure proper wastewater disposal from the campers and trucks that accompany the fair workers.

About two weeks prior to the 2017 Alabama National Fair opening at the Garrett Coliseum, the MCHD Environmental Division began making preparations for its arrival. The Food & Lodging Supervisor, Wes Rogers, contacted a representative with the Coliseum to determine various logistics such as getting authorization

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**Alabama Department of Public Health**

**Mission**  
To promote, protect, and improve the health of individuals and communities in Alabama.

**Vision Statement**  
The Alabama Department of Public Health will lead the state in assuring the health of Alabamians by promoting healthy, safe, prepared, and informed communities.

**Value Statement**  
The Alabama Department of Public Health believes that all people have a right to be healthy. Our core values are the provision of high-quality services, a competent and professional workforce, and delivering compassionate care.

## Alabama’s Health

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<b>Arrol Sheehan, M.A.</b>	Editor
<b>Noelle Ahmann</b>	Graphic Designer



### **Fair, continued from page 2**

for the MCHD staff to enter for inspections, securing a booth on site to collect fees and issue permits, and arranging transportation within the fairgrounds. Rogers also contacted Wade Shows Inc., the company contracted with the Coliseum to provide amusement rides and food vendors on the midway. Wade Shows Inc. is one of the largest carnival companies in the country with over 100 amusement rides to their name and reaching over 15 million people with their participation each year. About half of the food vendors at the Alabama National Fair are part of Wade Shows Inc.

On the morning of Friday, October 27, the MCHD Environmental staff headed to the Coliseum for inspections. The environmentalists involved with inspecting and permitting the food and drink vendors were Kelly Beardshear, Melanie Boggan, Justin Foster, Meonka Giles, Cindy Goocher, Wes Rogers and Jaleesa Thomas. At the end of the day, over \$5,000 in permit fees had been collected by Vera Meadows, the Environmental administrative support assistant, who was on hand to ensure all the money and receipts were balanced.

Because events like the fair operate for only a brief period, there is usually only one chance to get it right, making it crucial that any food safety

issues are addressed and corrected immediately. Approximately 180,000 people attended the 2017 Alabama National Fair, so the potential number of exposures to any contaminated food or drink or any other environmental health concerns could have been devastating. As always, it was a team effort by MCHD to successfully open the 2017 Alabama National Fair concessions and then make the continuing inspections and follow-ups throughout the following week.

*By MELANIE BOGGAN, R.E.H.S.*



**Food booths are set up along the midway. Temporary events such as the fair are inspected in addition to the more than 1,400 permanent food establishments regularly inspected by the Montgomery County Health Department.**



**Montgomery County Health Department staff working at the fair are, from left to right, Melanie Boggan, Wes Rogers, Vera Meadows, Cindy Goocher, Kelly Beardshear, Justin Foster, Meonka Giles, and Jaleesa Thomas.**

### **ALPHA, continued from page 1**

ALPHA dates back to 1924, when a group of health care professionals from across Alabama met for the first time to discuss public health issues. Periodic state meetings evolved into the Public Health Workers Conference, which became an annual event in the late 1940s. In the

1950s, ALPHA was formed, and the first ALPHA/Public Health Workers joint conference was held in 1957 in Birmingham. ALPHA is an affiliate of the American Public Health Association, the national voice of public health.

*By BLU GILLIAND*

# A Time of Excitement and Change: Electronic Health Record (EHR) to be Implemented

The EHR will be implemented in the department in the next few months, State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris wrote in an e-mail message to employees statewide February 23. Among its many advantages and improvements, EHR will streamline workflow by eliminating duplicative tasks, allowing for real time verification of insurance eligibility within EHR, and documenting the patient's health record electronically, thus eliminating many paper functions. The EHR will also give real-time access to ADPH's financial information and accounts receivable. Additionally, the EHR will interface with many current systems (e.g., LIMS, ImmPRINT, the Tobacco Quitline).

"While this is an exciting time, it will also be a time of change for our county health departments," he said. Since workflow processes in the counties will need to be standardized, some changes in the coming weeks and months will include the following:

- Signage – Signs are being prepared for county health departments that will let customers know systems are "Under Construction" and the client's patience will be appreciated as changes are made to better serve them.
- Work Flow Processes – The EHR will have separate functions for checking clients in and subsequently checking them out, collecting a fee if due, and scheduling an appointment if needed.
- Training - There will be training videos in LCMS and there are trained "Super Users" to work with counties when they "go live."
- Shut Down of PHALCON - Information will be provided about when each county will go live in EHR and when PHALCON will be shut down.
- Equipment Installation – This will be coordinated by the EHR and Information Technology team.

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## ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

### Computer-Based Clinic Management System

#### Electronic Health Record

The Electronic Health Record (EHR) is a computer-based clinic management system. EHR will create and maintain an electronic version of a clinic patient's paper chart in real-time, and be accessible statewide.

EHR will permanently replace ACORN, PHALCON, Nurse Practitioner Consult Template, and most paper records.

#### Take the Work Out of Your Workflow

EHR creates one record for one patient accessible all over the state. Once transition is complete, you will not have to:

- Log into multiple program platforms at intake
- Remember multiple passwords
- Try to figure out why the patient's receipt wasn't paid
- Stockpile forms from the warehouse
- Manually maintain on-site pharmacy inventory

#### Simplify Your Day

EHR will allow us to go mostly paperless by capturing:

- Medical history
- Immunizations
- Medicines
- Progress notes
- Test and lab results

#### EHR will automate and streamline billing and:

- Send automatic alerts & reminders to patients
- Control pharmacy inventory
- Verify Medicaid and other insurance with one click

#### Interface with:

Immprint
 QuitLine
 Medicaid & Blue Cross/Blue Shield
 Med-IT
 State Lab, Lab Corp & Oxford Lab

#### Make a Difference in Your Day

EHR comes with equipment and accessories: Scanners to scan in drivers licenses that place a picture of the client on the screen's banner, signature pads for patient use, barcode scanners for inventory control, and computer/laptops where needed! All of this will allow you to:

- Streamline the appointment process and clerical procedures
- Identify patients who are due for preventive visits & screenings
- Diminish travel costs for quality assurance (QA) activities
- Automate test results tracking
- Automate inventory control of medications
- Maximize billing and revenue recovery

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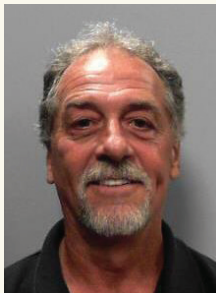
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alabamapublichealth.gov/ehr



# Bureau of Environmental Services Provides Assistance to Louisiana Department of Health

In September, the Louisiana State Department of Health requested assistance from the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) in conducting a rating inspection of one of its milk pasteurization plants. These ratings are required on a periodic basis and have to be conducted by a person who meets the federally approved training courses to conduct the rating; this person has the title of State Rating Officer. Louisiana's sole State Rating Officer had retired, the replacement had not finished the series of required training courses, and the milk plant's rating was coming due before November 1.



**Mike Clinkscales**

The ramifications of not having a rating inspection conducted would be that the plant could not sell milk in interstate commerce, or to school lunch programs, or to any program receiving federal funds to purchase milk. In effect, it would be out of business until a rating could be conducted.

In response to Louisiana's request, Mike Clinkscales of the Bureau of Environmental Services' Milk and Food Processing Branch was available to go to Baton Rouge for four days, from October 23-26, with Louisiana paying his expenses, and conduct the rating. The rating, which included a plant inspection and review of associated state paperwork, was concluded with the milk plant being able to continue production and sales with no interruption.

Brian Warren, Sanitarian Program Administrator, Food and Drug/Milk and Dairy Unit of the Louisiana Department of Health, said, "We appreciate ADPH's willingness to make Mr. Clinkscales available to us in our time of need and we also appreciate his efforts in helping us ensure that our facilities meet their federal requirements to ship milk products into interstate commerce."

Sherry Bradley, ADPH Bureau of Environmental Services director, said, "This is a great example of interstate cooperation in a time of need. We're glad we could provide this assistance to Louisiana and that Mike could help them out."

*By RON DAWSEY*

**EHR, continued from page 5**

Jennifer McNeel, State Clerical Director, and other staff will be visiting county health departments to assist with workflow patterns and provide input. Case management will be phased in after the go live date for Clinical Services.

Dr. Harris thanked and personally credited Laurie Stout, Wendy Coleman, Julie Till and staff for their work to ensure the transition from PHALCON to an EHR goes as smoothly as possible. Work groups and their leads are as follows:

Blue Team, User Acceptance Testing, Releshia Calhoun

Green Team, Business Model/Finance Transition, Carolyn Bern

Purple Team, Policy and Manual Revision, Valerie Cochran

Red Team, PHALCON Transition, Leigh Ann Hixon

Orange Team, District Equipment, Mark Skelton

Teal Team, District Communications, Knoxye Williams

"Change often leads to anxiety, but I know that by working together, we can reach our goal of providing superior services for our clients and our state," Dr. Harris said. "Thanks to all of you for your support and dedication!"

## Students Learn About Disaster Response

The Center for Emergency Preparedness staffed an educational booth on February 22 for the Alabama Emergency Management Agency Be Ready Day 2018. Shown under the tent at Riverwalk Stadium in Montgomery are Andy Mullins and Angie Wright. The event for third through sixth graders was an opportunity for students to learn more about the department's role in disaster response and share the information they learned with others.





# State Laboratory and Training Facility to be Built in Prattville

At a December 14 news conference, it was announced that the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL) will be constructing a new state health laboratory at the Legends Park at HomePlace in Prattville. The facility encompasses approximately 12 acres overlooking the Robert Trent Jones Golf Course. The center will be used as a training facility for staff statewide and to house other bureaus. Once finished, approximately 175 full-time employees will work at this site.

Dr. Scott Harris, then Acting State Health Officer, said, "We are excited to announce plans to build a facility on the cutting edge of 21st century laboratory technology to replace the current, outdated 1970s-era building. The new laboratory will provide the latest technical and mechanical systems for improved biosafety and biosecurity, to ensure continued compliance with national regulatory requirements, and to enhance employee safety. The training center represents our commitment to staff development."

Even though its current leased facilities on the Auburn Montgomery campus are overcrowded, the BCL continues to progress. For example, it is in its third year of a 5-year, \$1.5 million Food and Drug Administration grant to become International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 17025 accredited. This comprehensive standard demonstrates that the designated laboratory values quality and has taken the necessary steps to ensure that testing results are accurate and reliable.

In addition, more than 80 percent of the BCL's clinical and environmental samples now are reported back to their ordering providers via some form of electronic means. The BCL's ChemWare Horizon Laboratory

Information Management System continues to evolve as new instruments are interfaced and the number of results reported electronically continues to increase. Results are sent to departmental programs, law enforcement, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

Rabies testing results are sent to program managers and environmentalists, which include creating alerts for cases that might require immediate action, are automated to improve reporting time. Electronic ordering and reporting reduces data-entry errors, decreases turnaround time, and allows for near real-time reporting.



**Bureau of Clinical Laboratories Director Dr. Sharon Massingale and Assistant Director Dr. Aretha Williams hold an architect's rendering of the new building's exterior.**



**Shown at the announcement, left to right, are State Rep. Paul Beckman, Catherine Molchan Donald, State Rep. Clyde Chambliss, Dr. Scott Harris, Victor Hunt, Dr. Mary McIntyre, Ricky Elliott, Dr. Sharon Massingale, Jeffrey Wright and Dr. Aretha Williams.**



# Telehealth Partnership Improves Access to Care for VA Patients in Alabama: Ribbon Cutting Held

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held November 21 to announce a new collaborative agreement with the Alabama Public Health Telehealth Network, Birmingham Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and the Cullman County Health Department to provide telehealth services to veterans.

Veterans can now go to the health department and connect remotely for a health care visit with their providers at the Birmingham VA, using a secure audio-video internet connection.

Telehealth is a major benefit to patients who face difficulties in accessing needed health care due to barriers such as lack of transportation or requirements to spend time away from work or family obligations to get to appointments at distant locations.

The importance of telehealth to the department has been emphasized by the creation of a separate Office of Telehealth located in Field Operations. According to Office Director Michael Smith, telehealth provides a local resource that allows the patient convenient access to important health care that they greatly need, but which they otherwise may have difficulty accessing due to its distance from their home.

The collaboration with the VA began with a chance meeting between Chuck Lail, director of the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health, and a former colleague, Dr. Daniel C. Dahl. The support of Dr. Randall Weaver, Deputy Chief of Staff with the Montgomery/Tuskegee VA, sparked and supported this initiative from the beginning. Telehealth program coordinator Murray Lewis was also very instrumental in launching this partnership that helps ensure veterans' access to health care in rural areas.

"As you know, the veterans give so much of their lives to protect us and this country and have done so through the ages," said Congressman Robert Aderholt at the event. "One of the commitments that we make to them is that we are going to provide health care. Not only will telehealth cut down on the veterans' travel, it will allow them to see a doctor quickly. They risk their lives on a day-to-day basis, those that are serving and those who have served, and this is a way for us to try to make sure we help our veterans."

The telehealth carts are equipped with a high definition video camera and codec, a computer, two 24-inch monitors, a Bluetooth stethoscope, and a handheld

examination camera with three lenses. All telehealth sessions are HIPAA compliant and encrypted.

Northern District Social Work Manager Tammye Brammer assists VA patients and the health care provider at the Birmingham VA Medical Center. Ms. Brammer said, "As a social worker, I believe that telehealth will serve as a major benefit to patients who face difficulties in accessing needed health care due to barriers such as no transportation or lack of funds to purchase gas for transportation to get to appointments at distant locations. Telehealth will provide a local resource that will allow the patient access to important care that they greatly need, but may have difficulty accessing due to it being too far away from their home."

She added, "I believe this will be a positive component/service for local county health departments once a pay structure is established among insurance companies that encompasses both an origination site fee as well as coverage for the clinician or services that are being provided from the distant location. Because telehealth is fairly new, there are many things that need to be ironed out, but overall it is going to be a huge benefit to patients statewide to have these carts in their local health departments. The possibilities are endless."

ADPH presently has telehealth services available in 35 county health departments. In addition, the department recently received funding from several grants including the Appalachian Regional Commission, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. With the combined funding from these three grants, the ADPH will have 60 county health departments with telehealth capacity by June.



**Northern District Social Work Manager Tammye Brammer demonstrates the way telehealth is used with Congressman Robert Aderholt at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Veterans are able to overcome many barriers as a result of this partnership.**

## Jackie Frost Receives 2018 John Dunkel Humanitarian Service Award

**T**hrive Alabama AIDS Action Coalition named Jackie Frost of the Madison County Health Department its 2018 John Dunkel Humanitarian Service Award recipient. The award recognizes those who exemplify excellence in service and a deep commitment to improving the lives of the people the organization serves and who further the organization's mission.

The award is given in honor of Dr. John Dunkel who displayed tremendous dedication to the Davis Clinic at Thrive Alabama by being the first doctor in the community to see HIV-positive clients and helping start the Davis Clinic in January of 1991. He devoted one day a month from his practice for clients of greatest need and was medical director until his retirement from private practice in December 2010.

A nominator of Ms. Frost stated that she is "by far the exact definition of the John Dunkel Award," and continued, "I sincerely believe that many of our long-term clients would not be in care with our agency, nor would they have been as dedicated to their care and treatment if it was not for the compassion, support, and love that she showed them during the beginning of their diagnosis. Many times, she would go to very rural areas to meet with them in their homes and get them to the clinic to access treatment. It took a lot of courage as an African American woman to go to some of the areas that she did."

In addition to delivering ADAP medications to clients when transportation was a barrier and ensuring that food boxes were sent to them, Ms. Frost went above and



**Jackie Frost is shown with Jitesh Parmar, Chief Operating Officer of Thrive Alabama.**

beyond her job requirements. For example, she learned a new electronic medical records system to streamline documentation, often stepped in to meet with clients, and served as a mentor to all social workers "to look at the client situation with a different perspective."

Sharon Jordan, director of the HIV Division of Prevention and Care, commented, "Once again, this was a well-deserved honor to be recognized by your colleagues for your dedication in serving HIV clients in your community and beyond. Thanks for all that you do in representing the Alabama Department of Public Health!"

In adding his congratulations, State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris wrote, "You are very deserving and I really appreciate the job you are doing for ADPH. It is a privilege to work with you!"

## Employees Make Generous Donations at Open House

**C**entral Office employees in the Bureau of Health Provider Standards, the Office of Emergency Medical Services, and the Office of Radiation Control hosted the annual holiday open house for employees and retirees in the RSA Tower on December 11. The theme was "An Old Fashioned Christmas" with its spirit of giving. The Montgomery Area Food Bank and River Region humane societies (which include animal shelters in Autauga, Elmore and Montgomery counties) were the recipients of mounds of food and supplies given by all bureaus and offices. Recipients expressed their gratitude for the very generous gifts they were given. Some of the many staff members involved in preparing for the afternoon of food, music and fellowship are pictured here.





## Alabama Public Health Social Workers Honored with Statewide Awards



**Posing following the award presentation, left to right, are Patience Enyinda, Northern District Social Work Manager; William Kennedy, State Social Work director; Vera Mitchell, and Terrina Harris, Northern District Social Work Director.**



**Social Work Manager of the Year Heather Smith, left, is pictured with William Kennedy, State Social Work Director, and Deborah Shedd, Northern District Social Work Director.**

Vera Mitchell of the Madison County Health Department was selected as Public Health Social Worker of the Year for 2018. Awarded the honor of Social Work Manager of the Year was Heather Smith of the Marion County Health Department. The two recipients were recognized March 7 at the 2018 Public Health Social Work Seminar and Training held in Montgomery during National Social Work Month.

Nominators for the Public Health Social Worker of the Year Award said Ms. Mitchell “exemplifies leadership and commitment to the social work profession,” and describes her as “highly self motivated.” Ms. Mitchell serves on the Madison County Domestic Violence Task Force and works to promote domestic violence awareness each October. She goes above and beyond working with public health patients, the homeless and others in her community that are in need. A former Adjutant General Officer in the United States Army, Ms. Mitchell is a strong advocate for her patients.

Ms. Smith was commended for her “love of people” and “shows care and compassion for her job.” Ms. Smith is an excellent trainer that sees “the big picture.” Nominators wrote that she has “a positive energy that is contagious,” and “possesses the ability to take the knowledge she has and trains others to be effective workers.” The wife of a local minister, she serves in multiple roles for her church, and is very involved in working with youth both in her church and the community. She serves on the Quality Assurance Committee for the Marion County Department of Human Resources and volunteers with community fund-raisers and community fairs.

Public health social workers provide intervention services to help clients discover ways of meeting their needs and preventing future problems. Clients they serve may be children, families, elderly persons, and persons with functional and access needs.



## 'Share Your Smile with Alabama' Photo Campaign Winners Announced

To conclude National Children's Dental Health Month, the Oral Health Office held a news conference on February 28 to announce the winners of its first annual smile photo contest open to third grade students in Alabama.

Two children, one girl and one boy, were selected from photo submissions as the overall winners of the "Share Your Smile with Alabama" campaign. Kerrigan Benn of Jacksonville and Haedyn Leverette of Montgomery were chosen as the contest winners. The pair of third graders will be spotlighted in marketing campaigns to promote children's oral health in the state.

Governor Kay Ivey officially proclaimed the month of February as Children's Dental Health Month to help bring awareness to the advantages and disadvantages of access to oral health care in Alabama and among its most vulnerable population. This year's campaign slogan was "Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste and clean between your teeth for a healthy smile."

State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris said, "Good oral hygiene is linked to good overall health, and we encourage parents to create a routine for children that involves proper brushing and flossing at least two times per day to combat tooth decay."

A healthy smile is important to children, both for their overall health and self-esteem. Cavities (also known as caries or tooth decay) are one of the most common chronic conditions of childhood in the United States. Untreated dental cavities can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing and learning. Children who have poor oral health often miss more school and receive lower grades than other children.

State Dental Health Director Dr. Tommy Johnson said, "Educating children to form the habit of brushing and flossing, along with regular dental checkups, helps them keep healthy smiles. Dental decay is preventable, and we hope every parent will ensure that their children receive the oral health care their children need and deserve."

Plans are already underway to hold a second annual "Share Your Smile With Alabama" competition. The initial date for submissions for the 2019 contest is November 13, 2018.



**Contest winners Kerrigan Benn of Jacksonville and Haedyn Leverette of Montgomery (left to right) are shown with Dr. Grace Thomas, Medical Officer for Family Health Services; Dr. Tommy Johnson, State Dental Health Director; Dr. Scott Harris, State Health Officer; and Dr. Mary McIntyre, Chief Medical Officer.**

## We Seek Your Participation

If you have ideas about articles to share about your county health department, district, bureau or office, please submit photographs and descriptions you would like featured to Alabama's Health in care of Arrol Sheehan, editor, (334) 206-5510, [arrol.sheehan@adph.state.al.us](mailto:arrol.sheehan@adph.state.al.us). We welcome ideas, events and accomplishments and photographs in JPG format.



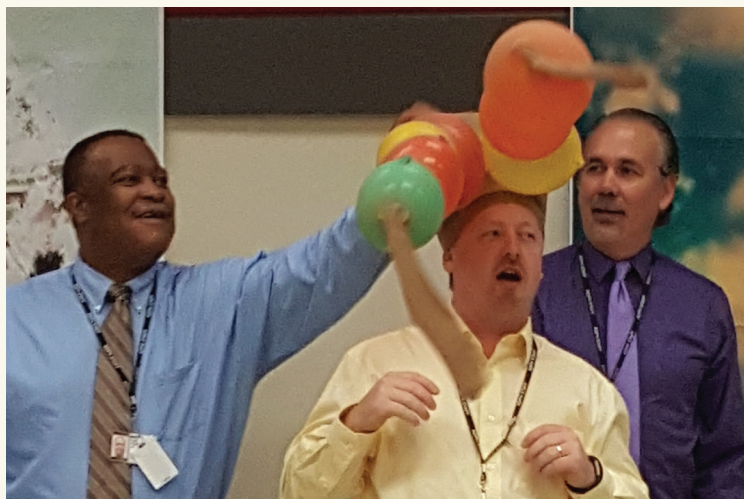
## Bullock County Opens New Health Department

A ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house for the new Bullock County Health Department was held November 9 in Union Springs. Then Acting State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris acknowledged the many leaders who made this new facility possible. Also commenting were Saint T. Thomas, Jr., Mayor of Union Springs; Mildred Whittington, Mayor of Midway; Ronald W. Smith, Bullock County Commission Chair; Roderick Clark, Bullock County Development Authority; Administrator Richard Burleson, East Central District; and Administrator Connie King, Bullock County Health Department.



## Northern District Employees Participate in Team Building Exercises

Carl Evans, Michael Glenn and James Congleton (left to right) use their professional skills and expertise during team building exercises at a recent Northern District staff meeting.



## Employees Create Uplifting Environment in Macon County

Creating an uplifting environment for patients and clients is a goal of the Macon County Health Department in Tuskegee. Employees regularly create, post and change decorations on their front entrance, clinic doors and office windows along with the changing seasons. Designers Gwen Cox, Sabrina Tarver and Tiphany Thompson, left to right, are shown alongside two doors they decorated in February.





## Breastfeeding Fact Sheet Helps Inform Health Care Providers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has created the Alabama Breastfeeding Fact Sheet that is available on the department's website. The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) program of the Bureau of Family Health Services has sent copies of this sheet to providers, WIC coordinators, La Leche League groups, and others. The purpose is to provide mothers with the support they need to reach their breastfeeding goals.

The fact-filled sheet lists four pages of data from 2012-2014 that include breastfeeding-related maternity care experiences, reasons women did not initiate breastfeeding and stopped breastfeeding, and maternity care practices that are unsupportive of breastfeeding in Alabama. Providers who use the data from the fact sheet are asked to let Alabama PRAMS know how the information was used so that it can be included in the PRAMS annual report. They can be reached at 334-206-2923 or Victoria.brady@adph.state.al.us.

The purpose of PRAMS is to learn why some babies are born healthy and others are not. New mothers are surveyed about their pregnancy, delivery and new baby. That information helps build on positive factors while overcoming adverse conditions. The information collected is used in developing health care programs and policies and helps professionals improve health care while making better use of health resources. This sheet may be viewed at [http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/prams/assets/BreastfeedingTopicReport\\_2012-2014.pdf](http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/prams/assets/BreastfeedingTopicReport_2012-2014.pdf)

## Lawrence County Health Department Hosts 'Coffee and Conversation'

Services the Lawrence County Health Department provides to local communities were highlighted when the county health department staff hosted a "Coffee and Conversation" on March 7 with local community partners. Home health, bio-monitoring and clinic services were featured. A former home health patient, Shawn Sherrill, was the guest speaker. She discussed how home health services assisted her in her recovery following an injury.

Partners attending included the following: Alabama Head Injury Foundation, Alabama Community Care, Probate Attorney Laura Terry Powell, Peck-Glasgow Agency, Hospice of the Valley, Lawrence County Board of Education; and some community pastors. Staff representing clinic, home health and environmental health participated.

Northern District Assistant Administrator Michael Glenn thanked the home health staff for scheduling and providing refreshments for this event.



**Some members of the home health staff and guest speaker Shawn Sherrill are pictured here.**

## Knowing Your Numbers Could Save Your Life; Hypertension Thresholds Lowered

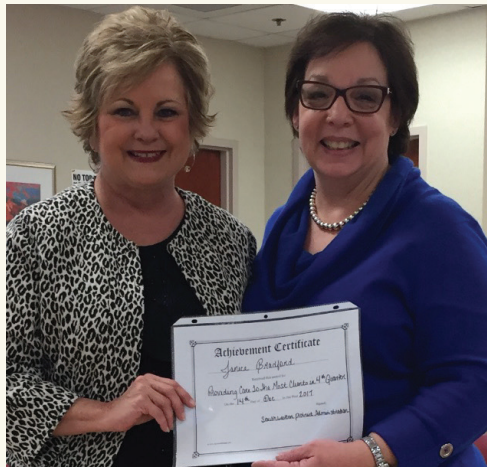
The American Heart Association estimates that 75 million or 1 out of every 3 American adults have high blood pressure. Rates are highest in non-Hispanic blacks whose rates are an estimated 10-12 percent higher than rates of whites. Of those individuals living with hypertension, about 81 percent of those are using antihypertensive medication, and only 54.4 percent of those have their condition controlled. The CDC estimates that 1 in 5 U.S. adults do not know they have high blood pressure.

**continued on page 16**



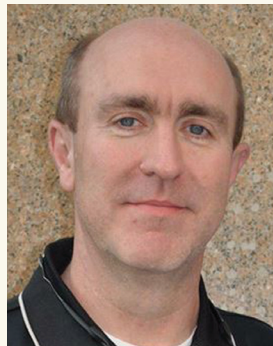
## CQI Highlight

The Southwestern District, Autauga, Lowndes, Houston and other counties are using the Continual Improvement System to gain insight on system-wide issues for QI teams to address. Southwestern District Clinic Director Pam Moody, Ph.D., D.N.P., R.N., C.R.N.P. shows staff of the Southwestern District how to use the chart. She is pictured with Deah Brewer, C.R.N.P., at right.



## BPPS Presents Posthumous Star Award

The late Andy Baker was named the posthumous recipient of the Star Award of the newly formed Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support. An employee of the Center for Emergency Preparedness, Baker died suddenly at his home in Montgomery on December 13.



Baker was a lifelong member of First Baptist Church Montgomery. He faithfully served in the student ministry there for over 25 years, preparing food each week for 200 students and serving as a mentor, a teacher, a trip chaperone, and a friend. He also served the church as a sound technician and volunteer.

Russell McCrory, student pastor at First Baptist Church Montgomery, wrote, "I have never seen somebody who served as faithfully and selflessly as Andy, and his death will be a heartbreak to so many of our students (past and present) especially."

Bureau director Jamey Durham said, "As was mentioned at his memorial service, Andy Baker represented someone who was invisible yet indispensable, and one who went above and beyond, whatever it took."

## In Memoriam

Colleagues mourn the loss of two public health employees who have died recently.

Patrick Allen Turner, custodian in the Etowah County Health Department, had worked in both Etowah and DeKalb counties over the past 10 years before his passing on October 26, 2017.



Janet Grafton's battle with cancer ended on September 21, 2017. She had been employed in the Bureau of Financial Services for more than 25 years.

## Commendations

If you would like to praise employees for their accomplishments, send letters of commendation to the State Health Officer or the employee's supervisor and a copy by e-mail to [Arrol.Sheehan@adph.state.al.us](mailto:Arrol.Sheehan@adph.state.al.us) for inclusion in this list. Four items are needed: the employee's name, work unit, name of the person making the commendation, and his or her city and state.

**Teresa Bennett**  
**Ryan Easterling**  
**Stuart Hoyle**  
**Michael Smith**  
from Sandra Blakely  
Montgomery, Ala.

**Dory Galloway**  
Jackson County  
Health Department  
from John Neely  
Bessemer, Ala.

**Cassandra Henderson**  
Center for Health Statistics  
from Michael Vernon  
West Orange, N.J.

**Summer Weaver**  
Information Technology  
from Charlotte H. Gilmore,  
BSN, RN  
Enterprise, Ala.

**Delano Williams**  
Center for Health Statistics  
from Suz Franzke  
Vero Beach, Fla.

**Beatrice Zeigler**  
Center for Health Statistics  
from Catherine Nickens  
Montgomery, Ala.  
Edward and Kathy Gilliland  
Oxford, Ala.

# Retirees

The following departmental employees have retired recently:

## November

**John Cowen**

Northern District

**Amelia Halbrooks**

Northern District

**Jane Rice**

Northeastern District

**Eric Twitchell**

Northern District

**Emma Williams**

East Central District

## December

**Kevin Crawford**

Program Integrity

**Martha Wickwire**

Northern District

## January

**Jimmy Brown**

Information Technology

**Marjorie Caldwell**

East Central District

**Rita Cornelius**

Northern District

**Daphne Cost**

Northern District TB

**Sherry Davis**

Northern District

**Anita Hamm**

West Central District

**Patty Harris**

Northeastern District

**Linda Hornsby**

Southeastern District

**Virginia Jackson**

Southwestern District

**Angel Jeffries**

Southwestern District

**Jacqueline Jones**

Health Care Facilities

**Jeff Kenchel**

Northern District

**Gloria Mahogany**

East Central District

**Delories Miller**

Southeastern District

**Carol Pace**

Jefferson District

**Pamela Pouncey**

Southwestern District

**Donna Rhoden**

Jefferson District

**Samson Salako**

Northern District

**Alisa Smith**

Southeastern District

**Sharron Smith**

Children's Health

Insurance Program

**Robert Stinnette**

Information Technology

**Suzanne Tate**

Southwestern District

**Ramona Warren**

Northeastern District

**Pamela Williams**

Southeastern District

**Cathy Wright**

West Central District

**Saundra York**

Northern District

**Mary Jiles**

East Central District

## February

**Pamela Galbreath**

Northern District

**Brenda Hamlin**

Northern District

**Robert Neel**

Northeastern District

**Theresa Person**

Southeastern District

**Calista Prince**

Northern District

**Nancy Ralston**

West Central District

## March

**Reginald Bell**

West Central District

**Valerie Cochran**

Field Operations

**Dena Donovan**

Family Health Services

**Samuel Phillips**

Southeastern District

**Rosemary Robertson**

Southwestern District

**Vickie Taylor**

Northern District

**Elizabeth Todd**

Family Health Services



**Tonya Taylor Appleyard retired from the Office of Radiation Control January 1 after more than 26 years of service.**



**Concluding more than 35 years of service, Sherry Goode retired from the Office of Dental Health February 1.**



**Debra Robbins retired January 1 from the Bureau of Professional and Support Services with 25 years' service. She is shown with Jamey Durham.**



**On January 1, Teela Sanders retired from the Children's Health Insurance Program. She had 26 years of service**



**Kathy Smith retired from the Immunization Division on February 1 with more than 39 years of service.**



**Ending 32 years of service on January 1, Marcia Thomas retired from the Bureau of Information Technology.**



**Sarah Martha Miller, right, retired from Healthy Child Care Alabama Program of the Bureau of Family Health Services with 35 years of service.**



## What is “EAP”?

EAP is the Employee Assistance Program which is a professional service that provides confidential assessment, referral and short-term counseling services to employees and their dependents for behavioral health-related problems.

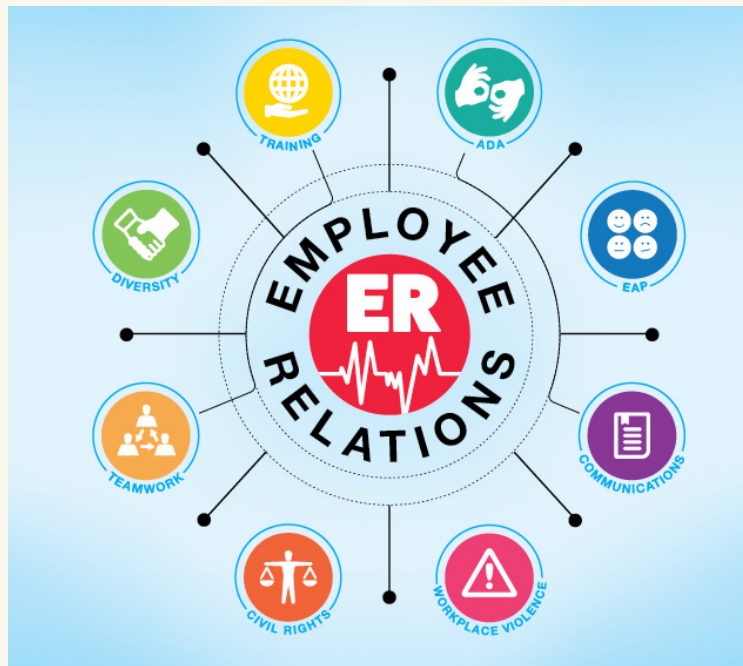
## We can help!

EAP includes advice and counseling on the following issues:

- Marital/family
- Emotional Health
- Stress
- Substance Abuse
- Grief & Loss
- Relationships
- Financial/Legal
- Anxiety
- Depression
- ADHD/ADD

## How Do You Access the Program?

1. Call BHS (Behavioral Health System) at (205) 879-1150 or 800-245-1150. Business hours are Monday-Friday (7 a.m.-5 p.m. Central Time)
2. Log onto their website:  
[www.behavioralhealthsystems.com](http://www.behavioralhealthsystems.com)  
(the password is “DORM”)
3. Contact your supervisor to enroll; or Danita Rose, ADPH Employee Relations Officer, (334) 206-9494



The day of November 30, 2017, was very emotional and overwhelming for the staff in the Office of Human Resources, due to the passing of our co-worker Glynis S. Rush, Equal Employment Officer, who worked in the Employee Relations Section. Grief is a powerful experience to go through. On December 14, 2017, Behavioral Health Systems conducted a Grief Counseling Session for the office. It allowed us to reflect and express our feelings regarding our relationship with Glynis openly. In celebration of “Go Red for Women Month,” we made a donation to the American Heart Association and released balloons in her memory. We would like to thank our fellow employees for your calls, cards, financial support, prayers, and patience as we resume our normal work duties. We encourage you to take advantage of and utilize the Employee Assistance Program.

*By DANITA ROSE*



**On February 16, coworkers of the late Glynis Rush gathered to honor her memory and present a donation to the American Heart Association. Shown from left to right, first row, Lisa Jones, Donna Barron, Danita Rose, Monique Wilson of the American Heart Association; second row, Gina Smith, Bureau Director Brent Hatcher, Ashley Johnson; third row, Jeanna Sasser, Robyn Peacock, Andrea Aaron.**

# Calendar of Events

## April 4-6

Navigating the River of Health, Alabama Public Health Association Annual Conference, Montgomery Marriott Prattville Hotel and Conference Center at Capitol Hill, Prattville. For more information, visit [alphassoc.org/conference](http://alphassoc.org/conference).

## April 6

HPV Policy and Procedures, 10-11 a.m.

For more information, contact the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, (334) 206-5618.



## April 17

2018 Scale Back Alabama Final Event.

For more information, contact the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, (334) 206-5618.



## April 25

Narcolepsy Program, noon-1:30 p.m.

For more information, contact the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, (334) 206-5618.



## April 25-26

Substance Abuse in Alabama: When it Hits Home, 19th Annual Rural Health Conference, Bryant Conference Center, Tuscaloosa. For more information, contact Mandy Fowler, [mandy.fowler@ua.edu](mailto:mandy.fowler@ua.edu), or (205) 348-9640.

## June 6

Home Health and TB, 10 a.m.-noon

For more information, contact the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, (334) 206-5618.



## June 7

Statewide Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m.

For more information, contact the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, (334) 206-5618.



## June 26

Start Talking Alabama, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

For more information, contact the Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, (334) 206-5618.



## Know Your Numbers, continued from page 12

One of the goals of the Cardiovascular Health program is to increase the number of individuals living in the state of Alabama who have their high blood pressure under control. It is estimated that nearly half of people with high blood pressure (45.6 percent) do not have it under control; but some areas in Alabama have much higher rates of uncontrolled hypertension.

The American Cardiology Association and the American Heart Association Task Force on Clinical Practice Guidelines decided to lower the threshold for diagnosing high blood pressure. For many years, a reading of 140/90 mm Hg or greater would have given a person a diagnosis of hypertension. The committee has decided to be more proactive in identifying individuals early and making more recommendations to encourage healthy lifestyle choices as well as aggressive medication regimens.

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of arteries as the heart pumps blood throughout the body. Usually the blood pressure readings are recording as two numbers, for example, 120/80 mm Hg. The amount of pressure in the arteries when one's heart contracts is called systolic (less than 120 mm Hg) and the amount of pressure in the arteries when one's heart relaxes is known as diastolic (less than 80 mm Hg).

High blood pressure makes the heart work harder, so it is important to identify this common health problem to get it under control. Normal blood pressure reading is defined as having a blood pressure of less than 120 mm Hg and less than 80 mm Hg. Elevated blood pressure is defined as having blood pressure readings between 120-129 mm Hg over 80 mm Hg or less. Stage 1 Hypertension is defined as having a reading of 130-139 mm Hg over 80-89 mm Hg. Hypertension Stage 2 is defined as having a blood pressure reading of greater than or equal to 140 mm Hg over 90 mm Hg or higher.

"We would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to know five numbers in order to take control of your heart health," Cardiovascular and Diabetes Nurse Debra Griffin said. "Those numbers are total cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar, and body mass index. These numbers are a good predictor of an individual's risk for developing cardiovascular disease."

General recommendations for living well with high blood pressure are to first identify the common health problem, strive to eat less salt, be physically active, eat more fruit and vegetables, quit smoking, lose weight, and drink less alcohol. If you have specific questions about heart health or cardiovascular disease, please call the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association at 1-800-242-8721.

By DEBRA GRIFFIN, BSN, RN